Worksession

Agenda Item #	2
Meeting Date	December 4, 2006
Prepared By	Suzanne Ludlow, Community & Government Liaison
Approved By	Barbara B. Matthews, City Manager

Discussion Item	Gym Feasibility Study Findings
Background	In August 2006, the City contracted with ANCL Architects of Washington, D.C. to research the feasibility and construction cost of a gymnasium addition to the Takoma Park Community Center and prepare a written feasibility study with conceptual drawings and component cost estimates. The detailed report was issued on November 1, 2006, and subsequently reviewed by staff and by the Community Center Liaison Committee. The study was posted to the City's web site, a copy was put on reserve at the Takoma Park library, full and abridged copies were available at no charge from the main reception desk, and copies of the full study were hand-delivered to the three Grant Avenue homes closest to the Community Center. Additional copies can be made available upon request. Staff will provide a power-point presentation of the study's findings at the December 4 worksession. Brian and Alexia Levite of ANCL Architects will be present to answer questions. Representatives of the Liaison Committee will also be present to share their comments and recommendations. Councilmembers are advised to bring their copies of the study to the worksession discussion.
Policy	Completion of the Takoma Park Community Center and exploration of a gymnasium addition is one of the top five priorities of the Takoma Park City Council for the current year.
Fiscal Impact	Construction of a gymnasium could cost between $5.5 and $8.1 million, if construction were able to begin in approximately eighteen months.
Attachments	Summary of Gym Feasibility Study Findings, prepared by City staff Copy of Power-Point presentation slides, prepared by City staff Recommendations of the Community Center Citizens Liaison Committee (11/30/06)
Recommendation	Hear presentation; ask clarifying questions; determine next steps. Staff recommends that the next steps include: 1) extending the contract with ANCL to refine a gymnasium option with the information learned to date and 2) setting a date for a public forum.
Special Consideration	In January, the County Council will be considering a supplemental appropriation of $360,000 to Takoma Park towards the cost of a gymnasium. A public hearing on that appropriation has been scheduled for December 12, 2006.

City Staff Summary – 11/29/06

Community Center Gym Feasibility Study
November 1, 2006
ANCL Architects

A. A good deal of work went into assembling documents that were needed as background information on the feasibility study. Some information was found to not exist:

1. Depth of the various utility lines in the Grant Avenue right-of-way (to coordinate relocations and connections).
2. Confirmation of which PEPCO lines are active and which are not.
3. Post-construction flood plain drawings.
4. As-built drawings of Community Center construction to date.
5. Many utility easements, and their respective widths, along Grant Avenue (although they are presumed).

B. As a municipal government, construction does not need to comply with the Zoning Ordinance nor most County development standards. (The City does need to comply with Building Code and Fire Code regulations.) Instead of zoning compliance, the normal review process is via Mandatory Referral through the Planning Board. The Mandatory Referral process reviews the level of compliance with the development regulations as well as comments on other aspects of site design. The City need not follow the recommendations that result from the Mandatory Referral process. However, the City respects the Mandatory Referral process and the comments of the agencies and citizens that participate in the process.

C. The original 2002 plan that was submitted for the Mandatory Referral process was an early version of the Community Center that included a gymnasium and underground parking in the rear, along with a ramp system and extensive landscaping. If a gymnasium is proposed again (even in basically the same location), it is likely that the City will need to go through a second Mandatory Referral review, evaluating the new plan. M-NCPPC staff may determine that an administrative ruling by them is permitted, in which case the case need not go before the Planning Board. The extent of the differences between the old and the new plan will determine whether the review will be administrative or not. For example, one major issue that is likely to be reviewed is the number of parking spaces proposed to exist on site. The zoning standards would require 211 spaces on space with a gymnasium. Given the observed usage patterns of the Community Center, City staff suggested 175 spaces as a target number for number of spaces actually needed on site with a gymnasium. (Staff intends on doing a parking survey in the near future to get current parking usage data.)

D. After discussions with City staff and the Liaison Committee, two sizes of gymnasiums were considered in the feasibility study: one is approximately the size of the Piney Branch Gymnasium (about 60 x 90 with some bleacher seating on one side and small

"run-out" areas at the sides and ends of the court); and the other is a high school sized gym (about 74 x 105 with a bit more bleacher seating and adequate safety space on the sides and ends of the court).

E. After many different designs were considered, three site plans were identified for cost estimating purposes (see below for notes on the cost estimating):

Scheme 1.5 - high school sized gymnasium, built in the original Grant Avenue location. Cost in two years: $7.7 million. This gym would relocate the utilities so that they would go around the gym. Holding cells would be moved to the Police level. Toilets and lockers would be provided. Fitness area would be smaller than desired/programmed. (The spaces can be developed further as the design progresses into a schematic design.)

Scheme 3.2 - high school sized gymnasium, built behind the Community Center with a narrow road going around the gym to maintain vehicular circulation. Cost in two years: $8.1 million. Holding cells would be moved to the Police level. Toilets and lockers would be provided. This gym would have a larger area for a fitness room, closer to the desired/ programmed size.

Scheme 1.6 - Piney Branch gym sized gymnasium, built in the original Grant Avenue location. Cost in two years: $5.5 million. This gym would be built over the utilities in the area. Police holding cells were not moved under this scheme due to the smaller area of excavation. (Leaving the holding cells on the second floor means that prisoners will be brought through public areas of the building.) **This option is not recommended by the architects due to two major problems with this scheme:**

1. Agreement must occur from all of the utility companies (including the City, concerning the storm water lines) to be able to construct this facility over the lines. Any one of the utility companies could kill the plan. The City Engineer recommends against building over the City's storm sewer lines and is not certain he would even have the authority to permit such construction.

2. Even if all of the utility companies were agreeable to construction over the lines, the City may not wish to take on the liabilities of this arrangement. Leaks or other problems would impact the operations of the gym, require the removal and demolition of portions of the gym exterior walls and removal of the gym flooring, the gym concrete sub floor, as well as excavation. The City would then need to pay for reconstruction. There may also be issues of liability to adjacent properties for longer than normal utility disruption.

Notes on cost estimating. Sked Consulting provided the cost estimates to ANCL Architects and provided the following Clarifications and Qualifications:

This estimate is based upon plans, sections, etc. given to A. Shed on October 16th 2006 together with an outline spec. Included were plans of each level of each scheme plus a building section, site plan and site utility plan for each scheme. An outline specification was also available. Continuous discussions took place with the architect.

This estimate assumes an unpredictable market condition due to high energy, etc.,prices; recent shortages of materials due to hurricanes, and a heavy construction workload in the USA; it is very difficult to assess future price trends at this time. Escalation has been very significant the past two years.

This is a feasibility study to examine and compare different schemes and to let the Client see the consequences of choosing one scheme rather than another. We are NOT attempting to assess the low bid that any scheme may attract but to recommend what in our view is a reasonable budget for future work.

The study assumes that the design of the project will be completed and the project ready to commence in eighteen months and a construction period of 12 months. Escalation has been calculated over a period of two years to the midpoint of construction. Escalation has been estimated at 8% per year over this period of time. A design contingency factor of 15% has been included to cover the lack of detail at this early stage in design. A construction contingency factor of 5% has been included to cover change orders during construction due to unknown conditions, owners instructions, etc.

The estimate excludes: Professional fees, testing, inspections, cost of land, legal and accounting fees, moving expenses, furniture, furnishings and equipment except as specifically itemized in this estimate, hazardous material removal and abatement. Interior landscaping. Additional costs for work done in phases or out of sequence working. Any costs in connection with security measures. Commissioning, cabling, audio/visual equipment, telephone systems and installations.

This cost estimate is based upon certain information. The scope of the estimate should be reviewed for completeness and to ensure that our interpretation of the drawings and other information is correct. This estimate should be updated as the design evolves and is completed.

This estimate represents our opinion of probable costs. We have exercised due professional diligence in preparing this estimate/study. As we have no control over material selection, market conditions, bidding, etc. no guarantee is given or implied with this study/estimate.

F. Cost estimates for add alternates were requested for certain “green” and design features. Many of the items were relatively inexpensive. However, the items below have significant costs associated with them. (Example costs below are for Scheme 1.5, and include general conditions, fee and bond, design contingency, escalation, and construction contingency.)

Green Roof	$542,084	
Exterior Stair	$247,924	(likely needed for green roof access and maintenance)
Three masonry towers	$158,671	
Mock pitched roof	$210,901	(similar to what was originally proposed)
Decorative brick patterns	$ 49,585	
Synthetic wood gym floor (rather than real wood)	($ 16,054)	deduct item

G. In looking at the numbers closely, two key points emerge:

1. **The cost of the high-school sized gym portion of the project alone would be about $2.6 million in two years. This accounts for only about one-third of the total cost of the project.** Other costs are related to the parking garage, support space, site work, police space, and utilities. 40% of the cost of each of these elements is due to the "soft costs," such as General Conditions, Fee and Bond (11% of total cost); design contingency (11% of total costs, since the estimator was just working from concept drawings); escalation (13% of total cost); and construction contingency (5% of total cost). These figures do NOT include architect's fees for the detailed design work, likely to be about 10%, but, the more detailed the design, the less a design contingency is needed.

2. After looking through the cost estimates, it appears that there is very little cost difference in building Scheme 1.6 (the Piney Branch-sized gym) with the utilities relocated as with keeping the utilities in place. This is due to the costs of constructing the special foundation that would be required to span the utilities. **Therefore, it does not make sense to build over the utilities in any configuration.** The cost of building Scheme 1.6 (with the utilities rerouted) in a way that eliminates the 25 underground parking spaces but installs the police holding cells: approximately $6 million in two years.

H. An architect hired to do a design might come up with certain ways to save money on aspects of the design, could mix and match some of the desirable elements, etc. In particular, reduction of underground parking and thoughtful attention to arrangements of support spaces may lead to cost savings.

I. The General Summary of the cost estimates appears on the next page. Costs for the gym foundation are found in the category of "Gymnasium" for all three schemes, as well as in the category "Parking Garage" for Schemes 1.5 (high school sized gym on Grant Ave) and 1.6 (Piney Branch sized gym on Grant Ave). Under Scheme 3.2, the category "Site Work" includes the cost of a short retaining wall for a road that would go around the gymnasium. This road does not need to be included, but was a preference by staff for this scheme. As noted in G, above, Scheme 1.6 could be altered to take funds out of the "Parking Garage" category and move them to the "Site Utilities" category–to allow for re-routing of the utilities from under the building and reducing special foundation costs. Building over utilities is not recommended.

Gymnasium Feasibility Center Costs

General Summary

	Scheme 1.5	**Scheme 3.2**	**Scheme 1.6**
Parking Garage	$1,117,940	$818,872	$1,168,983
Police / Storage	337,163	365,064	0
Gymnasium	1,398,536	1,574,501	1,198,530
Support Space	1,003,874	1,078,195	322,943
Site Work	656,390	1,065,681	662,755
Site Utilities	152,393	14,410	4,000
SUB - TOTAL	$4,666,296	$4,916,722	$3,357,211
Add:			
GC, Fee, Bond	839,933	885,010	604,298
Design Contingency	825,934	870,260	594,226
Escalation	1,013,146	1,067,519	728,918
Const. Contingency	367,265	386,976	264,233
TOTAL	**$7,712,575**	**$8,126,486**	**$5,548,885**

Citizens Liaison Committee to Community Center
November 30, 2006 – Hydrangea Room, TP Community Center, 7500 Maple Ave.

By consensus we agreed that our objective is to build an affordable gym where children and adults can participate in a range of physical activities even if that means eliminating certain amenities normally associated with a gym.

We also agreed by consensus to make the following recommendations to the City Council:

1. We believe it's important to collect more data before deciding on any option for a gym.
2. Rather than obtaining a cost estimate for a wish list of items we believe the City should put a ceiling of $3.5 million on the project and determine what sort of gym can be built for that amount (all related costs included) in a location adjacent to the community center. *
3. Because almost all gyms in Montgomery County are built by the school system we recommend the City consult with their architects and contractors to investigate whether our project can be more cost-effective. This should happen before deciding on any option.
4. We would also like to request that our committee be given an opportunity to continue to meet with the ANCL designers and City staff so our input can be included prior to any decisions.

* Note: We would like to find out what savings can be achieved by building a gym on a slab set on pillars. We recommend reducing the size and weight of the gym to eliminate underground excavation (except for the pillars) and minimize other site work. The gym belonging to Takoma Park Presbyterian Church might serve as a model.

Thank you,
Howard Kohn
Committee Chair